Finding Subjects and Verbs

1. Verbs usually show action: run, sing, study.
2. A few verbs are called "linking verbs" and simply link the subject to a word used later in the sentence.
   Example: John is happy. The linking verb "is" links the subject "John" to the adjective "happy."
3. Find the verb of the sentence and ask, “Who/what is doing this?”
   Example: Under the bridge by the willow tree sat two boys. The verb is "sat," so ask who it was that sat.
4. The subject may be compound (more than one subject).
   Example: Dorothy, the cowardly lion, and little Toto escaped.
5. The subject is never in a prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase always starts with a preposition and ends with a noun or a pronoun.
   Example: (Over the river) and (through the woods) (to Grandmother's house) we go.

Agreement of Subject and Verb

1. Subjects and verbs must agree in number (singular/plural).
2. Most plural NOUNS end in "s" BUT in the present tense, singular verbs end in "s" and plural verbs do not.
   Example: Boy runs. Boys run. (Subject and verb will not BOTH end in "s.")
   One of the twins eats chocolate, but the other hates it. Cats from the Purr-fect Cattery seem especially intelligent.
3. Certain indefinite pronouns are always singular and require a singular verb.
   Example: Everyone taking algebra studies hard.

Indefinite Pronouns

- one words - body words - thing words
one nobody nothing each
anyone anybody anything either
everyone everybody everything neither
someone somebody something
Clauses

1. An independent clause contains a subject, a complete verb, and a complete thought. It is, in itself, a complete sentence.
2. A dependent clause also has a subject and a verb and usually starts with a word that makes the clause unable to stand alone as a sentence.

   The following list contains commonly used words which begin dependent clauses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>after</th>
<th>if, even if</th>
<th>when, whenever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>although, though</td>
<td>in order that</td>
<td>where, wherever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as</td>
<td>since</td>
<td>whether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because</td>
<td>that, so that</td>
<td>which, whichever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before</td>
<td>unless</td>
<td>while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>even though</td>
<td>until</td>
<td>who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how</td>
<td>what, whatever</td>
<td>whose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Each sentence must contain at least one independent clause. A dependent clause must always be attached to an independent clause.

Joining Clauses

1. Two independent clauses can be joined in three ways:

   —a comma and a coordinating conjunction
     Example: We went to the park to pick up the boys, and we drove to McDonald’s for dinner.

     The 7 coordinating conjunctions can be remembered by the acronym FANBOYS:
     For
     And
     Nor
     But
     Or
     Yet
     So

   --a semicolon with NO conjunction
     Example: We went to the park to pick up the boys; we drove to McDonald’s for dinner.
--a semicolon with a conjunctive adverb
Example: We went to the park to pick up the boys; furthermore, we drove to McDonald's for dinner.

The following words are **conjunctive adverbs:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>also</th>
<th>in addition</th>
<th>nevertheless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>as a result</td>
<td>indeed</td>
<td>on the other hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consequently</td>
<td>instead</td>
<td>otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furthermore</td>
<td>meanwhile</td>
<td>therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>however</td>
<td>moreover</td>
<td>thus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Two independent clauses can also be separated with a period and a capital letter to make two complete sentences
   Example: We went to the park to pick up the boys. We drove to McDonald's for dinner.

* **NOTE:** Failure to join two independent clauses correctly will result in the dreaded RUN-ON SENTENCE...
  Example: We went to the park to pick up the boys we drove to McDonald's for dinner.
  or
  We went to the park to pick up the boys than we drove to McDonald's for dinner.
  . . . or a COMMA SPLICE!
  Example: We went to the park to pick up the boys, we drove to McDonald's for dinner.

**RUN-ON SENTENCES AND COMMA SPLICES ARE SERIOUS ERRORS IN YOUR WRITING.**

3. A dependent clause and an independent clause are joined as follows:
   – If the dependent clause is first in the sentence, it must be followed by a comma..
     Example: After we went to the park to pick up the boys, we drove to McDonald's for dinner.
   – If the independent clause comes before the dependent clause, no comma is necessary between them.
     Example: We went to the park to pick up the boys before we drove to McDonald's for dinner.
Pronouns

1. A pronoun takes the place of a noun.
   Example:  *Tom Richards* is my neighbor.
   *He* is a fireman.

2. A pronoun must have an antecedent (a noun it takes the place of) and it must agree with that antecedent in gender and number. Pronoun agreement errors include the following:
   When I took my son to the hospital, *they* put ice packs on his swollen wrist. (Who? Missing antecedent)

   *Everyone* must put *their* books on the floor during the test.
   (Pronoun "their" is plural; antecedent "everyone" is singular.)

3. A pronoun must be used in the correct case.
   a. The following are **nominative** case pronouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first person</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second person</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third person</td>
<td>he, she, it</td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Nominative case pronouns may be used in the following ways:
   --As subjects of sentences.
   *He* and *I* are going to the concert.
   --Following any form of the verb "to be" (is, am, are, was, were, will be). It was *she* who won the prize.
   --In a comparison using "than" or "as."
   Little Suzie is taller than *she*.

   b. The following are **objective** case pronouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first person</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second person</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third person</td>
<td>him, her, it</td>
<td>them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Objective case pronouns may be used in the following ways:
   --As the objects of verbs.
   The cream pies hit Sally and *me*.
   --As the objects of prepositions.
   The letters were from the teacher and *them*. 
Punctuation Quickie

Commas
1. Use a comma after an introductory phrase.
   -- Fortunately, the monster had eaten a large breakfast.
   – Although it snowed yesterday, I still had to feed my pet snakes.
2. Use commas to separate items in a series.
   – We bought apples, peaches, and pears.
   – Marina went to the pet store, bought eleven cats, and started her own pet emporium.
3. Use a comma between complete thoughts when a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS) is used.
   – All of the students ate doughnuts during the morning, but they dieted all afternoon.
   The tall mountain rises majestically from the desert, and the small village crouches at its base.
4. Use commas to set off sentence interrupters.
   – The clown, dressed in colorful clothes, turned a flip.
   – Bill, the new student in class, came in singing.
5. Use commas with direct quotations.
   – "Please sit up straight," said Miss Primm.
   – The evil-looking old witch shrieked, "Give me your first-born child!"
     "When," whispered little Betty, "will Santa come down the chimney?"
6. Use commas to separate the name of the person spoken to.
   – It is true, Sir, that this gorilla reads the Wall Street Journal.
   – Please throw away this green, furry-looking stuff from the back of the refrigerator, Mark.
7. Use commas to separate elements of dates and addresses.
   – He was married on June 13, 1959, in New London, Connecticut.
   – Her address is 2142 Elm Drive, Rapid City, Michigan, and will remain the same in the future.

Semicolons
1. Semicolons may be used in TWO ways:
   -- To separate two independent clauses.
      We went to the store; we bought a turtle.
   -- To separate items in a series when the individual items have internal commas.
      The officers who were elected are Tammy Smith, president; Bill McGowan, vice-president; George Whiting, secretary; and Millie Admundsen, treasurer.
2. Semicolons are NOT interchangeable with colons or commas. Be careful not to confuse them with these other punctuation marks.

Colons
1. Colons are marks of introduction and can be used in THREE principal ways:
   --To introduce a list.
       We took the following items with us on the camping trip: a knife, a flashlight, a bedroll, a tent, and lots of food.
   --To introduce a long quotation.
       Pat Conroy wrote a vivid description of his grandfather's house in Atlanta: "The house was one of many red brick..."
   --To introduce an explanation.
       There are two ways to do this job: the easy way and the right way.
2. Notice that a colon is always preceded by a complete sentence. It is never correct to use a colon in the following manner:
   For example: spaghetti, sauerkraut, and pickled pigs' feet.
3. Colons are also used after the greeting in a business letter.
   Dear Mr. Guthrie: